

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON.

Passage of the Post Office Appropriation Bill.

THE BILL SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT.

THE CONTEST FOR THE HOUSE PRINTING.

Passage of a Bill to Abolish the Franking Privilege by the Senate.

Various Revelations Respecting a Post Office Official.

Our Special Washington Despatch.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15, 1860.

THE POST OFFICE APPROPRIATION BILL. The President having approved of the Post Office bill, it is, therefore, a law, as amended previous to its passage. It appropriates \$4,000,000 for the deficiency in the revenues and for defraying the expenses of the Department for the year ending with June last; \$4,000,000 towards the supply of the Department for the fiscal year ending with June next; and a further sum of \$2,400,000 in payment of the salaries of officers and clerks, transportation of the mails, wrapping paper, bags, stamps, etc. Interest at the rate of six per cent per annum to commence sixty days after the expiration of the quarter in which the service was rendered, but in no case prior to the 1st of May, 1860, to the present date, shall be paid on any sums found to be due the contractors for carrying the mail. The interest shall be paid only to the contractors themselves in full of all damages, by reason of failure or delay in payment. No interest is to be allowed on payments for the last quarter ending with December last. A sum for this purpose is appropriated.

THE CONTEST FOR THE HOUSE.

As the republicans legally elected Deforee Printer to-day by a majority, in consequence of the absence of Mr. Adams, of Virginia, but the Speaker allowed the democrats to consume time by filibustering until Mr. Jenkins could reach the House and vote, which latter act was applauded as a skillful piece of management. Mr. Adams, of Massachusetts, refused to vote, not liking the manner in which the caucus nomination was made. Many of the republicans felt aggrieved that Mr. Adams did not attend the caucus, as his single vote would have nominated Mr. Mitchell, and prevented the existing state of things in the House. Mr. Morse, of Maine, was also in the caucus, and, although opposed to Deforee, refused to vote for Mitchell. Mr. Etheridge on the last night to-day, threw the only scattering vote for Gales & Seaton. He and Mr. Adams were hard pressed to vote for Deforee, but to no purpose. The last ballot to-day stood, with the Speaker's vote: Deforee, 91; Glosbrenner, 90; and Etheridge's scattering vote. Tomorrow Mr. Adams' vote alone can settle the question in favor of Deforee.

There is some talk to-night that Mr. Adams will lead off with the name of Mitchell to-morrow, and that Etheridge will vote in the same way, with the understanding that one or two other gentlemen who voted for Deforee to-day will follow in the same direction, thus indicating, as in the contest for Speaker, who can be elected, it having been shown almost to a certainty who cannot be.

THE SENATE CONTESTED SEAT. The Committee on Elections will take up the contested seat of Mr. Sickles first. It will probably be reached to-morrow. The case turns upon a point of law, as to the competency of the House to take up and decide a contested seat where the legal notification of intention to contest was not given by the contestant. Mr. Williamson contends that the law requiring such notice applies to claimants of seats to whom certificates of election have been issued, which does not reach to the case of Sickles, he never having received a certificate.

THE HOUSE PRINTING INVESTIGATION.

The House selecting committee to inquire into the printing, binding and engraving business, in all the departments of the government, with instructions to report a plan for the future execution of such work, consists of Messrs. Grover, Quaries, Smith, Hoard, Walton, Florence and Gurley. This committee intends to make a thorough overhauling of the different branches of business named, and will no doubt report a bill which will result in a pecuniary advantage to the government.

THE ADMISSION OF KANSAS.

A bill to admit Kansas, and a Homestead bill, were introduced in the House to-day by Mr. Grover, and duly referred to the committee.

TROUBLE AMONG POSTMASTERS.

Affiliaries have been filed at the Post Office Department, sustaining serious charges against the Postmaster at Haverhill, Massachusetts, which are to be investigated at once. Other Massachusetts postmasters are accused of complicity with lottery tickets.

THE HARRIS'S FERRY INVESTIGATION.

Mr. Conway, of Kansas, the former agent of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, was discharged to-day by the Brown Raid Investigating Committee of the Senate. He testified that he met Old Brown in Boston in the winter of 1856, and heard him speak at several meetings, and had various conversations with him relating to the affairs of Kansas. Brown never mentioned to him any design to invade the slave States. Brown called on him afterwards at Lawrence, in the fall of 1856, and deposited with him for safe keeping certain documents, consisting of promissory notes, made by various persons in the Territory to the National Kansas Relief Committee—notes which he had gathered up as agent for that committee. Mr. Conway accepted the custody of the papers as a favor to Brown, and held them subject to his order. Brown never made any disposal of them, and after his execution Conway forwarded them to Dr. Webb, of Boston, for the committee to which they belonged. He never saw Brown afterwards, and never had any knowledge of his Harper's Ferry incursion until he read of it in the newspapers. Conway did not remember what precise object Lane's Military Board was designed to effect, but he was satisfied that Lane never had the remotest idea of invading Missouri, Virginia, or any other State on the globe. Conway did not think that Brown had anything to do with Lane in any way, or operation. The New England Emigrant Aid Company was purely business, and its object was to make money. Its method was to put up sawmills, and a few temporary houses, at various places in the Territory where towns had been located, and to direct emigration to those places. It received its compensation in land and in around these towns. It depended on the growth of the towns for the value of its property and the profits on its investments. It never paid the fare of anybody to the Territory, except its own agents. It provided a method of information to all emigrants, so that persons from different neighborhoods going to Kansas could be put into communication with each other, and could be thus formed into companies. It also arranged for railroad companies for a small recompense. The fare of persons going out in these companies. The New England Emigrant Aid Company never had anything to do with John Brown, nor with any plan for forcibly disturbing slavery in any State or Territory of the Union. Conway stated that he went to Boston, in 1856, where he made John Brown's acquaintance, to set before the people of the North the merits of the cause of Kansas, because he had been driven out of Kansas by violence. Mr. Collier asked how he came to be driven out, and Conway proceeded to state, when Senator Davis objected to opening up the old affair of Kansas, which objection was sustained by the committee, and Conway's testimony was thus summarily closed.

THE HOUSE OFFICE DESPATCH.

The House having refused to concur in the amendment of the bill to abolish the franking privilege, Mr. Hinton moved the Senate to receive from its amendment. He was unwilling to attempt to force legislation on the other House, but he wished to see the bill passed. Mr. Tamm moved to reconsider. He was opposed to the Senate receding. In the debate in the House a strong opinion was expressed adverse to the franking privilege, but the bill was not passed. Mr. Hinton moved to reconsider. He was opposed to the Senate receding. In the debate in the House a strong opinion was expressed adverse to the franking privilege, but the bill was not passed. Mr. Hinton moved to reconsider. He was opposed to the Senate receding. In the debate in the House a strong opinion was expressed adverse to the franking privilege, but the bill was not passed.

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He would not back down from the position he had assumed in the matter.

THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PLATFORM.

The committee appointed by the Senatorial caucus, to whom all transactions of the Senate are to be referred, and who are authorized, if they deem it expedient, to report back resolutions, or a platform, to meet conflicting interests in regard to the question of slavery in Territories, is composed of the following members: Messrs. Green, Chairman; Green, Chairman; Riker, and Fitch. The committee will probably bring forward a proposition, which will be submitted to the next caucus on Friday. The construction of this committee is similar to the interests of Judge Douglas.

A TELEGRAPH LINE TO THE PACIFIC.

A proposition is now before the Senate Post Office Committee, and a bill will be reported to-morrow, authorizing the contract with Zenas Barnum, Hiram Sibley, T. R. Walker, J. H. Benjil, J. D. O'Connell, C. M. Stobbs, Norman Green and F. A. Bee, for the use by government of a line of telegraph from Missouri to San Francisco, for a period of ten years, at an annual compensation of fifty thousand dollars from the time the line is completed. The line is to be finished in two years, at an estimated cost of one million of dollars. Although the compensation is regarded as small, it is believed that the great amount of telegraph interests now holding the parties named in the bill will secure the building of the line.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE SONS OF MALTA.

The National Convention of the Sons of Malta commenced its session to-day, the object being a thorough revision of the laws and ritual of the Order.

THE SENATE YESTERDAY.

The Senate yesterday, among other nominations, confirmed Philip Frank Thomas, of Maryland, as Commissioner of Patents; and Judge Knowles, of Tennessee, as Treasurer of the United States.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS.

Communicating with next week there is to be a double daily train by the Southwestern route from Washington to New Orleans, instead of one as heretofore.

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